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## The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Achieving Strategic Resilience: A Field Study on Faculty Members at Damascus University (Deans - Deputies).

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### *Abstract*

This study aimed to study the impact of transformational leadership in its dimensions (ideal impact - inspirational motivation - intellectual motivation - individual considerations - empowerment) on strategic flexibility on the faculty members of Damascus University (deans and deputies). To achieve the goal, the researcher used the descriptive approach, and a questionnaire consisting of (32) items was distributed to a sample of (65) deans and vice deans. (56) questionnaires were retrieved. The results of the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS27 software. The study reached the most important findings: there is a statistically significant effect of transformational leadership on strategic resilience at Damascus University. It also showed a statistically significant effect of the dimensions of transformational leadership (ideal impact - intellectual motivation - individual considerations - empowerment), while there is no effect of inspirational motivation on strategic resilience at Damascus University. The study recommended increasing attention to the application of the principles of transformational leadership due to its impact on achieving strategic flexibility.

**Keywords:** Transformational Leadership, Strategic Resilience, Ideal Impact, Inspiring Motivation, Intellectual Motivation, Intellectual Considerations, Empowerment.

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## Chapter One: General Framework of the Study

### 1. Introduction

Today's business organizations, whether public or private, productive or service, have become facing great challenges as a result of the changes in their environment, so they need a dynamic and flexible management capable of facing challenges, and a type of individuals who have the technical ability to manage the administrative apparatus to be able to carry out their tasks accurately and sincerely. In the face of these challenges, the management leadership, with its methods, methods and patterns, has become unable to make the organization able to face the intensity of competition and achieve the desired level of performance, which makes it imperative for organizations today to use dynamic and flexible methods in order to be able to raise their activities to the level of developments in their reality. In order for the organization to be able to adapt and control the changes that occur in the environment around it, which allows it to maintain its competitive position and achieve its desired strategic goals, it was necessary to find a new leadership style that ensures its continuous improvement in its performance, thus seeking to lead the changes that occur. Transformational leadership is characterized by following methods and behaviors that encourage the empowerment of the public, such as delegating responsibilities and enhancing their abilities to think on their own, and encouraging them to come up with new and creative ideas, so it focuses on long-term goals with an emphasis on building a clear vision, and thus it is a key pillar on many aspects, most notably strategic goals.

### 2. Problem of the Study

Strategic agility is of paramount importance in educational institutions, especially in universities, which are the engines of societal development, as in light of the rapid changes in the higher education environment, the ability to adapt and respond quickly to challenges has become imperative.

Educational institutions are considered the main pillar in building an educated, educated and constructive society, and they are also one of the basic elements that move countries over the years from developing countries to developed countries, as education is one

of the most important necessities in our lives, because it teaches us how to think, and how to work properly. In short, it tells us how to live a successful and meaningful life.

Since universities are a vital tool in human societies, they can achieve the goals and objectives they have sought, which are related to the desired efficiency and effectiveness through leadership, and leadership is the main element for this, and this requires leaders to possess special capabilities and requirements, in order to be able to face contemporary challenges and deal with them efficiently. Through research and review of previous studies, it was found that there is a lack of interest in strategic agility as one of the main factors for the success of academic organizations, as well as the lack of studies that seek to study the impact of transformational leadership on strategic agility.

Is there an impact of transformational leadership on achieving strategic agility at Damascus University?

The following sub-questions are subordinate to it?

- Is there an effect of the ideal effect on strategic agility at Damascus University?
- Is there an effect of inspirational motivation on strategic agility at Damascus University?
- Is there an effect of intellectual stimulation on strategic agility at Damascus University?
- Is there an impact of individual considerations on strategic agility at Damascus University?
- Is there an impact of empowerment on strategic agility at Damascus University?

### **3. Study Model**

**Independent variable:** Transformational leadership by its deletion (ideal effect, inspirational motivation, intellectual arousal, individual considerations, empowerment) (Arukayasami et al., 2015:323).

**Dependent variable:** strategic agility.

### **4. Previous Studies**

- **A study (Al-Rashidi, 2018)** aimed to determine the level of application of transformational leadership and its impact on organizational creativity in Saudi and private universities, and to achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher designed a questionnaire that included (55) items, and the research was conducted in the field on all deans of colleges and heads of departments in eight Saudi public and private universities in Riyadh, and the number of sample members reached (237), and the researcher retrieved (147) complete data responses by (62%). One of the most important findings of the research is that all dimensions of transformational leadership are practiced at a high level, and that the practice of organizational creativity in all its dimensions is at an average level. The research also reached the most important recommendations represented in the need to reconsider the criteria under which university leaders are selected from the heads of departments and deans of colleges, to become more in line with the requirements of contemporary changes, and the availability of an organizational climate that supports transformational leadership in Saudi universities in attracting and retaining innovators.
- **A study (Yamina & Wahiba, 2021)** aimed to clarify the impact of transformational leadership on innovation in higher education institutions at Ahmed Deraya Adrar University, and to achieve the goal of the study, we distributed 80 questionnaires to the study sample and 70 questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS software, where the most important results were the existence of a statistically significant effect of the dimensions of transformational leadership on innovation in higher education institutions at a small percentage of 0.38%, and the lack of application of the transformational leadership and innovation method at the university This is due to the lack of exploitation of their scientific outputs.
- **A study (Al-Lamsi, 2021)**, it aimed to determine the degree of application of strategic agility, determine the level of organizational creativity at Damanhour University, and reveal the existence of statistically significant differences in the degree of strategic agility and the level of organizational creativity from the point of view of some university leaders according to the faculty variable (practical/theoretical), and reveal the existence of a statistically significant correlation between strategic agility and the level of organizational creativity from the point of view of some university leaders.

The study used the descriptive method, and the study tools were the strategic agility questionnaire and the organizational creativity scale, which were applied to an intended sample consisting of (98) academic leaders at Damanhour University. The results concluded that the degree of applying strategic agility from the point of view of some university leaders (dean of the faculty – vice dean – heads of departments) was moderate, and the level of organizational creativity from the point of view of some university leaders (dean of the faculty – vice dean of the college – Heads of Departments) came at an intermediate level, and the results revealed that there are statistically significant differences in the degree of application of strategic agility from the point of view of some university leaders according to the faculty variable (practical/theoretical), and there are statistically significant differences in the level of organizational creativity from the point of view of some university leaders according to the faculty variable (practical/theoretical), and there is a statistically significant relationship at the level of significance (0.01) between the total sum of the dimensions of strategic agility and the total sum of the dimensions of organizational creativity from the point of view of some academic leaders at Damanhour University.

- **A study (Al-Faqih, 2018)** sought to shed light on the role of strategic agility in achieving the competitive advantage of Yemeni universities, and it selected dimensions of strategic agility, which are: (strategic sensitivity, core capabilities, clarity of vision, shared responsibility, speed of response, and choice of strategic goals) to know its role in achieving the competitive advantage of Yemeni universities, and the paper used the descriptive-analytical method, and the paper reached a set of conclusions, the most important of which is that strategic agility has a role in igniting the spirit of change in the heart of the Higher education institutions, in a way that

improves their speed of response and adaptation to the developments of the times, which helps them achieve their competitive advantage.

• **A study (Wasden, 2014)** investigated the correlation between self-perceived transformational leadership and self-understanding resilience within the boundaries of leadership in higher learning. A 25-point multi-factor leadership questionnaire was used. The demographic data variables included data on: gender, age, leadership level, years of work at the university, years of experience in higher education, and the level of completed education among individuals. The results of the study showed that there is a moderately strong statistical correlation between self-perceived transformational leadership and self-understanding resilience within higher education leadership. Transformational leadership and resilience do not appear to be influenced by age, gender, experience, level of leadership, or educational attainment, but by years of work or longevity of the institution at the university where the research was conducted.

• **A study (Jackson, 2017)** aimed to focus on the relationship between transformational leadership style and the understanding of followers (employees) for leadership success. This research study offers the opportunity to develop the areas of change, management and academic aspects of the organization. By studying the success of transformational leadership, through the perception and understanding of higher education workers: as it is linked to leadership outcomes. There are four elements of a transformational leadership style: exemplary impact, inspirational motivation, mental motivation, and individual considerations, all of which are possessed and applied by a transformational leader: the expected results of followers occur, and transformational leadership is fundamental in transforming the lives of individuals and organizations.

• **A study (Menon & Soursch, 2020)** aimed to assess the strategic agility of higher education institutions using a vague multi-degree method. A univariate analysis was conducted to identify and understand areas of improvement and the suggestions made were designed to help management reformulate strategies and promote strategic agility, and after conducting a 40-60 minute in-person interview with some academic experts, the overall index of results came that the strategic agility score was 6,19 indicating that higher education institutions have flexibility in applying Strategic agility and has the potential to be improved.

• **A study (Philip and Kingsle's , 2020)** aimed to talk about how in the turbulent environment in which organizations operate, strategic resilience is critical to building universities' capacity to withstand disruptions, and remain more competitive, sustainable, and relevant to meet national development needs. This paper applied agility theory to examine how GIMPA responded to its financial crisis to remain a financially self-sufficient public university in Ghana. The data were collected through interviews with former deans, faculty, administrative staff, alumni, and officials of the higher education institutions concerned. In response to the cuts in government funding, the paper found that GIMPA management was flexible enough to adopt an entrepreneurial approach that enabled the commercialization of academic services to generate resources for sustainable funding. The findings suggest that resilience as a senior management practice is able to help manage the trade-offs between stability and resilience during crises.

**The current study differs from the previous studies** in terms of the environment, as the current study is applied in the Syrian environment, while the previous studies were applied in different environments, and in addition, this study is the first study in Syria to the researcher's knowledge that linked the two variables of transformational leadership and strategic agility.

## **5.Study Goals**

- 1- Evaluating the impact of transformational leadership in its dimensions on achieving strategic agility.
- 2- Evaluating the level of transformational leadership at Damascus University.
- 3- Evaluation of the level of strategic agility at Damascus University.

## **6.Study Importance**

### **- Scientific Importance:**

**First:** Enriching the theoretical aspect related to transformational leadership and the extent to which it is related to strategic agility at Damascus University, as the researchers hope that this study will contribute to enriching the Syrian and Arab library related to this field.

**Second:** The addition that the research will provide from recent results and data collected about the study problem, thus reaching information that has not been previously addressed or talked about, or these results reached in the study become theorems and depend on the public domain.

### **- Practical Importance:**

**First:** The study acquires its field importance in that it dealt with an area that is still scarce in the field studies conducted in this field at Damascus University, and the study also acquires its field importance because its results can benefit the country's universities, and its administrations can be rationalized in the best ways to enhance the dimensions of transformational leadership and provide strategic agility requirements, and in what can reflect positively on the performance of these universities and their ability to adapt and work in the contemporary business environment.

**Second:** The researcher hopes that researchers and those interested in transformational leadership and the extent of its relationship to strategic agility will benefit from the results of this study and its recommendations, and that this study will contribute to providing a helping hand to decision-makers to identify ways to activate the role of transformational leadership practice in Syrian universities, and that this study will open new doors for researchers in the field of transformational leadership and strategic agility with the intention of conducting research and studies related to the current study, and enhance or receive more light on the findings of the study.

## 7. Study Hypotheses

**Main Hypothesis:** "There is a Statistically Significant Effect of Transformational Leadership on Achieving Strategic Agility at Damascus University."

It is divided into the following sub-hypotheses:

1. "There is a statistically significant effect of the ideal effect on strategic agility at Damascus University."
- 2- "There is a Statistically Significant Effect of Inspirational Motivation on Strategic Agility at Damascus University".
- 3- "There is a Statistically Significant Effect of Intellectual Arousal on Strategic Agility at Damascus University".
- 4- "There is a Statistically Significant Effect of Individual Considerations on Strategic Agility at Damascus University".
- 5- "There is a Statistically Significant Effect of Empowerment on Strategic Agility at Damascus University".

## 8. Study Methodology:

The researcher used the descriptive method, as it is more appropriate to achieve the research objectives, and to address the applied aspects of the study topic, the questionnaire was relied on as a tool to collect raw data from the researchers, measure the study variables, and work on analyzing it statistically using the SPSS@27 program.

## 9. Study Population and Sample

The research population was represented by all faculty members at Damascus University, while the research sample is a deliberate (intentional) sample consisting of 65 faculty members (dean – deputy dean) according to the Directorate of Planning and Statistics at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and accordingly, the questionnaires were distributed to the intended sample, and 56 questionnaires were retrieved, of which 6 questionnaires were excluded. Because they were not valid for statistical analysis, and the remaining 50 questionnaires, all of which were valid for statistical analysis, were organized and arranged through the Excel program, in preparation for being transferred to the SPSS(27) program to conduct the appropriate statistical tests.

## Hypothesis Testing

**H1** Linear regression analysis showed a significant effect of transformational leadership) in achieving strategic agility on faculty members at Damascus University ( $\text{Sig} = 0.004 < 0.05$ ), and the value of the model's coefficient of determination was only 16%. The hypothesis is acceptable

**H1-1** Multiple linear regression analysis showed a significant effect of the ideal influence dimension in achieving strategic agility on faculty members at Damascus University ( $\text{Sig} = 0.044 < 0.05$ ), and the value of the regression coefficient was ( $B = 0.194$ ). The hypothesis is acceptable.

**H1-2** Multiple linear regression analysis showed no significant effect of the inspirational motivation dimension in achieving strategic agility on faculty members at Damascus University ( $\text{Sig} = 0.456 > 0.05$ ), and the value of the regression coefficient was ( $B = 0.100$ ). The hypothesis is rejected.

**H1-3** Multiple linear regression analysis showed a significant effect of the dimension of intellectual arousal in achieving strategic agility on faculty members at Damascus University ( $\text{Sig} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), and the value of the regression coefficient was ( $B = 0.658$ ). The hypothesis is acceptable.

**H1-4** Multiple linear regression analysis showed a significant effect of the dimension of individual considerations in achieving strategic agility on faculty members at Damascus University ( $\text{Sig} = 0.015 < 0.05$ ), and the value of the regression coefficient was ( $B = 0.303$ ). The hypothesis is acceptable.

**H1-5** Multiple linear regression analysis showed a significant effect of the empowerment dimension in achieving strategic agility on faculty members at Damascus University ( $\text{Sig} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), and the value of the regression coefficient was ( $B = 0.482$ ). The hypothesis is acceptable.

## Summary of Hypothesis Results

- There is a significant effect of the ideal influence dimension on achieving strategic agility at Damascus University ( $\text{Sig} = 0.044 < 0.05$ ), with a regression coefficient value of ( $B = 0.194$ ).
- There is no significant effect of the inspirational motivation dimension on achieving strategic agility at Damascus University ( $\text{Sig} = 0.456 > 0.05$ ), with a regression coefficient value of ( $B = 0.100$ ).
- There is a significant effect of the intellectual stimulation dimension on achieving strategic agility at Damascus University ( $\text{Sig} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), with a regression coefficient value of ( $B = 0.658$ ), and it has the greatest impact among all dimensions.
- There is a significant effect of the individualized consideration dimension on achieving strategic agility at Damascus University ( $\text{Sig} = 0.015 < 0.05$ ), with a regression coefficient value of ( $B = 0.303$ ).
- There is a significant effect of the empowerment dimension on achieving strategic agility at Damascus University ( $\text{Sig} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), with a regression coefficient value of ( $B = 0.482$ ).

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### • Conclusions:

- 1- The deans and their deputies at Damascus University enjoy a high level of transformational leadership, i.e. the level of application of transformational leadership at the university is high.
- 2- The deans and their deputies at Damascus University rely heavily on inspirational motivation to deal with their subordinates, as they direct their subordinates to work in a team spirit, encourage their enthusiasm, and are interested in motivating their subordinates to achieve the goals of the university.
- 3- The deans and their deputies at Damascus University pay great attention to individual considerations when dealing with their subordinates, as they express their appreciation to their subordinates when they do good work, and listen to them and their suggestions with great interest, and they also deal with each individual employee in the way that suits him, as well as they are interested in discussing the personal needs of the subordinates.
- 4- The deans and their deputies at Damascus University rely on the ideal influence to deal with their subordinates, as they take care of their actions in order to gain the appreciation and influence of their subordinates, and try to serve as a role model for them, and go beyond their own interests to achieve public interests.
- 5- The deans and their deputies at Damascus University are very interested in empowering, training and qualifying their subordinates well to carry out their tasks, as they encourage their subordinates to assume responsibility, support the exercise of the powers granted to each individual, delegate some of their powers to their subordinates, and are keen to provide appropriate training opportunities for all subordinates.
- 6- Deans and their deputies at Damascus University rely heavily on the method of intellectual stimulation when dealing with their subordinates in order to achieve the best results, as they share their ideas with their subordinates to solve work problems, encourage them to propose appropriate and new solutions to work problems, and enthusiastically accept the suggestions of their subordinates, and provide the opportunity for subordinates to think about traditional problems in new ways.
- 7- The existence of a kind of strategic agility in the university, but not at the acceptable level, from the point of view of the sample members, that is, the presence of strategic agility in the university is limited to some points only, as it shows the agreement of the sample members that the university has a future vision regarding what it seeks to achieve, and that decisions are made at the university in partnership with administrative leaders, and that the university has the ability to adapt to change in light of the new decisions.
- 8- The university suffers from some problems that limit strategic agility, insufficient human resources to conduct business, and the existence of a deficiency in the incentive and reward system at the university, which means that it needs to be developed, as well as the university's reliance on the employee performance development system is not done in the required way, and there is an imbalance in the ability to detect opportunities and threats in time, and there is no great care to ensure that the subordinates at the university are fully aware of the university's strategies and goals.
- 9- There is a statistically significant effect of transformational leadership on strategic agility at Damascus University.
- 10- There is a statistically significant effect of the ideal effect on strategic agility at Damascus University.
- 11- There is a statistically significant effect of intellectual arousal on strategic agility at Damascus University.
- 12- There is a statistically significant effect of individual considerations on strategic agility at Damascus University.
- 13- There is a statistically significant effect of empowerment on strategic agility at Damascus University.
- 14- There is no statistically significant effect of inspirational motivation on strategic agility at Damascus University.

### Recommendations:

1. Increasing interest in the application of transformational leadership principles due to their impact on achieving strategic agility.
2. Attracting and attracting appropriate and qualified human resources, and training and empowering well-existing resources.
3. Working to update the incentive and reward system at the university.
4. Relying on the employee performance development system, in order to achieve better results by overcoming mistakes and benefiting from positive points.
5. Work on analyzing the work environment well, in order to discover opportunities and threats in a timely manner.
6. The need to continuously verify that all subordinates are fully aware of the university's strategies and objectives.
7. Developing effective feedback systems that allow transformational leaders to quickly assess situations and adapt to changes, contributing to rapid response and improved strategic agility
8. The need to foster a culture of innovation and creative thinking, which contributes to raising the level of strategic agility, by encouraging employees to come up with new ideas and explore different ways of solving problems>
9. Emphasizing the importance of improving communication channels between all levels of the university, which helps improve the decision-making process and contributes to improving the speed and flexibility of responding to changes.

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